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# Guide

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## THE CORE OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

Bernard J. Cooke, S.J.

## PARISH EMPLOYS LAY THEOLOGIANS

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## Formation and Information

There is a good deal of talk about formation as well as information in an adult instruction class. We have thought about this and we have decided that there are two concessions which might be made immediately. One is that formation is desirable. The other is that even without the present emphasis good instructors have always managed to do more than to inform.

Beyond these concessions we come to a problem. Formation as a by-product is feasible, but how can formation be the warp and information the woof of our instructions? The ordinary instruction class publicly proposes to give information without obligation. Some advertise: All questions answered. No questions asked. But overt attempts at formation, particularly through liturgical steps, presupposes a commitment.

One instructor has a solution to this problem. He sits at a table and invites all who wish to become Catholics to sit with him. The others remain in the room as auditors. In effect he is calling for commitment. We are willing to be instructed by success, but *a priori* this method gives us an uneasy feeling.

A solution which has greater appeal lies in an adaptation of the French experiment in a pre-catechumenate. There are centers in Lyons and Paris where those who apply for instruction are initially admitted to a pre-catechumenate of indefinite length and only when they profess a desire for Baptism are they inducted into the catechumenate and prepared for reception into the Church.

In this scheme the pre-catechumenate is already concerned with formation, and a certain amount of it is a qualification for admission to the catechumenate. We would like to see the pre-catechumenate without formal concern for formation, yet so conducted as to be a seedling ground. Out of it would come those prepared to enter into a true catechumenate. They would then be committed to formation and to the whole new liturgy of adult Baptism.

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# The Core of the Christian Message

Bernard J. Cooke, S.J.

The topic for this morning's talk is "The core of the Christian Message." Obviously there will be a somewhat different approach to the answer to that question "what is the core?" by each speaker who attempts to answer it; but I think that we can begin to formulate an answer, and then discuss it together.

Perhaps one might say—and I will try to justify this—that the core of the Christian message is that *life-giving love has triumphed over evil in the resurrection of Christ.*

Now why do I make that particular statement? I would ground my justification for that statement in the revelation which we find in the New Testament Scripture. If we go back to the earliest teaching of the Church as recorded for us in the sermons preached by Peter and Paul in the *Acts of the Apostles*, we will find that from the very beginning the resurrection of Christ dominated the presentation of Christ by the early Church. The resurrection of Christ is seen as a triumphant thing; it was a triumph precisely over the evil that to some extent destroyed or tried to destroy mankind; moreover, this Christ who is the Risen Christ triumphant over evil is seen precisely as a gift to mankind from a loving Father.

I think one can read from one end to the other in the New Testament literature and find that it all bears on this core message. Everything else grows out of this. If we study the history of the development of the Creed we see that it is around the resurrection of Christ that the other articles begin to cluster and develop. This is not just something that we spin out of our heads. This is something that we discover by going back to the Word of God as we

find it in Scripture which is the record of the faith of the early Church.

Taking Sacred Scripture then as the concrete origin of this statement, let us try to expand a bit. What can this statement mean for us? We will try to answer that under four different topics.

The first is that the Christian message, the Christian revelation, is Christ.

I think it can be a somewhat diminished and watered down and weakened explanation of catechetics and teaching in general to consider the message as merely the communication of certain propositions about Christ, about the Trinity, about Grace. I think that often our ordinary explanations of the theological process fall into that trap. We explain the process as one in which the major is a proposition drawn from Revelation, the minor a proposition from some natural knowledge like philosophy, and the conclusion a proposition which is a deepened understanding of both. We do this instead of realizing that we are theologizing, that we are working out of faith, that the major in that syllogism must be something more profound. If faith is operative, then the object of faith is the *revelation*, and the revelation is never a proposition. The revelation is Christ.

That is precisely, I think, the significance of the Incarnation as far as a "message" point of view is concerned. In the Old Testament God, step by step, through human institutions, human words, and human personages, revealed Himself; the oracles of the prophets, for example, were a ver-

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balized expression of what God was trying to communicate to His people. But deeper than the verbalized expression was the person of the prophet himself; it was what he stood for, what he was, how he lived, the spirit of God working in him and communicating by all his actions the power of God. It was that above all which manifested, which was as it were a sacrament, what God was communicating to His chosen people. With the coming of Christ for the first time we pass into an entirely new dimension of that process where a divine Person Himself speaks the fact because He is the Word.

The revelation of God the Father is God the Son. Christ tells his apostles at the Last Supper, "Have I been so long with you, and you do not know that he who sees me sees the Father?" Christ's human words and Christ's human actions are only a medium to understanding the Person who is there, and it is that Person who is revelation. What is revealed to us above all (and our scholastic theology tells us this) is the Blessed Trinity. The prime object of our faith is the Blessed Trinity, not the statement of the Council of Nicaea about the Blessed Trinity, not the statement of the Council of Lyons or the statement of some college or seminary textbook about the Trinity, but the Trinity itself. And our point of entry into the mystery of God as the fullness of personal life, our point of entry into the understanding of what we are as Christians, our point of entry into what is meant to be accomplished in the mystery of the redemption, is Christ Himself.

St. Paul tells us there is no other mediator given to men. The whole area of the development of our supernatural life passes in and through Christ. There is no way of deepening our faith-consciousness apart from a personal and deepening awareness of who Christ is and what He stands for. Therefore if one is going to say what the core message is, one must say: communicate Christ to people. Whether catechizing or teaching in a school or seminary situation, until I have brought the people to whom I am speaking into an awareness, into a consciousness, into an intimate contact with the reality of Christ as He is, then I have not succeeded. If I have gotten to the point where they can give me back perfectly what I have in the textbook, or

even better, where they can give me back verbally even with a little bit of their own understanding, if that is all I have done, have not succeeded in my function. Of course there is nothing so pleasant to a teacher than to have his students give him the supreme tribute of giving back his own words. But that is not the function of one who is catechizing. In ordinary teaching it is important that we give students something beyond ourselves, the truth which is the purpose of communication. In this area of religious teaching it is absolutely essential. I think we begin here, with the idea that what we communicate, the message we give is Christ.

## Expression of The Father

Again, we can never be content that we ourselves understand already the Christ we are giving to people. That is one of the things you yourself know from your seminary studies, when for example, you consider what was studied about the Incarnation, and when you try to understand what is Incarnation, you become conscious of the profound problem that is involved there. An infinite God, in the mystery of the communication of divine life which we call sanctifying grace is somehow giving us a participation in His own way of being; and in order to accomplish that, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man. That is an ineffable mystery.

God Himself is the Word. To put it in our language, God faces a tremendous problem in finding a means of expression. What is there that God can use to speak to human beings with a limited intellect as ourselves, something which will not pervert the greatness, the transcendence of what is being told us? What words can one possibly find to fit that mystery? It is only in terms of the Incarnation of Christ that an answer can be found. Even God Himself could find nothing else that could do it adequately apart from that, because the only thing that can express the fatherhood of God is the Son of God. And, therefore, the only thing that can tell us of the mystery of sonship which we share is the Son.

Now if that is the problem intrinsic to the situation of communication of revelation, then how in the world can you and I ever be sure we have grasped clearly and

sharply what Christ is and be content with the way in which we then try to communicate to people who and what Christ is? It is extremely difficult not to betray the reality of Christ by our own preconceived notions. There is a constant process of purifying our idea of Christ through which all of us must go throughout our life. That is why we meditate on the New Testament. One must, day after day, go back there, take a scene of Christ's life, take His words and ask oneself what was going through the mind of Christ there, so that one can recapture as far as possible the mentality of Christ, so that one can understand Him and communicate Him to other people.

This is just one aspect of the problem. Until one has recovered as far as possible the mentality of the Old Testament-trained people who are the contemporaries of Christ, one has not begun to enter into the human mentality of Christ. The Christ who walked in Palestine and who thought and spoke to people, did so in the context of a world which was that of the Old Testament. He did not come out of Greek and Latin civilization, out of Teutonic Anglo-Saxon background, as you and I do. He did not think in those categories.

How many of us can say that we understand all the psalms perfectly? I think the recitation of the breviary has as one of its salutary effects the realization that we do not understand completely everything in Scripture. There is no one psalm we understand completely. And yet those psalms were the prayer framework of the human prayer of Christ Himself. Christ thought those psalms, He prayed those psalms. If one can begin to understand what just those meant to Christ and His contemporaries, he has entered deeply into the mind of Christ. That is just an example, a fragment, of the task we face in *understanding* that which we communicate and in then finding a valid way of communicating that which we understand.

Might I just suggest, then, that if the word of God in Sacred Scripture is one of our great possibilities of discovering Christ, it might also be the medium for other people discovering Christ. Perhaps one will much more effectively communicate to people this contact with this understanding of the reality of Christ, if he uses as far as possible the Scripture itself. Those of us

who have already had experience in teaching have found that the Word of God has a charism all its own. If one will forget about his own beautifully constructed explanations and keep them in his files (where most of them belong); if he draws from Scripture the word of God about Christ, so that he describes Christ as revelation describes Him; then those who hear him will come to genuine understanding. The first thing to emphasize then, in talking about the core of the Christian message, is that.

## The Risen Christ

It is important secondly to stress the fact that the Christ who is the core of the Christian message is the *Risen Christ*. Saint Paul tells us that if Christ be not risen our faith is empty, it is vain. By and large, I think we tend to understand that in an apologetic framework; this is the final proof of the whole process of argumentation: the Resurrection of Christ; and if I do not have that proof, I might just as well forget about the rest of my argument. That is perfectly true, but there is something much more profound in that statement. The profundity comes in this, that Christianity is the mystery of Christ. It is Christ continuing to live in the Church. But how can there possibly be the living, vital reality that we call the Mystical Body of Christ if Christ be not risen? What sense would historical extension of a corpse make? None whatsoever. So the importance of the Resurrection is an ontological present importance.

When we are communicating Christ to people we make a big mistake if we communicate to them only a marvelous historical personage of 2000 years ago. The Christ about whom we wish to inform people is the Christ whom we want them to contact, the Christ who is the core of the Christian message now, Christ *now*. We do not go back to the Gospel of St. Mark primarily to find out what Christ said or what Christ did, we go back as Catholics, as Christians, to discover the present reality of Christ. Christ is unchanging. Christ is now the Risen Christ.

In going back to the record of what Christ said and did, we go back through the Scripture to the primitive Church which produced the New Testament literature, a

Church which taught people what it meant to be a Christian (that is, a continuation of Christ) by telling them what Christ said and did.

If one tells a Catholic: "You are the continuation of Christ, you are a part of the body of Christ," he may ask, "Who exactly is Christ?" One can then explain: "Christ did this and He did that and He said these things—which we are still living." It is in that context that one opens up a whole new understanding of the Sacramental system: Sacraments are the continuing actions of Christ in the mystery of the Church. Large portions, perhaps almost all, of the Gospels were written to explain to the early Christian community those actions of Christ which are the roots and the beginnings of Sacramental life.

It is absolutely important, therefore, in presenting the Christian message to focus on the mystery of the *Risen Christ*. Just check sometime when you are dealing with a group of Catholics. In one form of questioning or another, try to find out how aware they are of the Christ who is involved in the mystery of the Eucharist as the Risen Christ. I think you will find somewhat to your dismay that the vast bulk of people do not think that. They are surprised to hear that is the situation and one discovers that they have had rather strange ideas about the state of being in which Christ is now as man. Many of them are not even convinced in their practical thinking that Christ still exists as man. A large portion of our Catholics still think that Christ died as a man and the Resurrection is somehow the return by Christ to divine life. You become aware that they do not understand what it means to speak of the Risen Christ.

One of the things I think is vital in explaining the Resurrection is that the Resurrection of Christ is not a question of Christ *coming back* to life. Christ did not return to his former life. Christ began a new life. Risen life is not just the old one all over. If it were, there would not be much basis for Christian hope. What we hope for is a life beyond and above the life we now have. The risen life is a domination of all levels of our living. By this principle of living in us which is sanctifying grace, and the risen life of Christ Himself is the complete domination of His human nature by that unique

type of grace which Christ had. It is that unique type of grace which Christ has that we call the *gratia capitinis*, which is the source ontologically and causally of all the grace which you and I possess.

## Action of Christ

The activity of Christ which is present in the Church at this moment, the activity of Christ which is flowing into our sanctification in the Sacramental system, is that activity of the risen Christ. And, therefore, our sanctification and our lives, our community together in the mystery of the Church, is the living together of the risen life.

The world is already involved in the mystery of the Resurrection. That is the kerygma of the early Church. Christ is risen and so are you and I. The fulfillment of the mystery of the Resurrection comes when we have our risen body. It is not a question of our being sort of "plugged in" in the next life and all of a sudden starting to glow. No. The risen life is going to be the overflow, the expression, of what we have already in germ, the principle of divine life within us.

What a difference such an idea makes in the people's orientation with regard to Christianity. What a difference it makes in the fundamental optimism which is involved in discovering that we possess already that activity of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of Christ's grace which introduces us into new life. For were we not born in our Baptism into that life which flows from the Resurrection of Christ? What else is St. Paul talking about when he says we were buried together with Christ in Baptism and we rise again to new life? He is not just using words. He is not just talking about a promise in the future. He does speak of a promise, but in the *Epistle to the Ephesians* what is that promise of unending life? It is the *present possession* of the Holy Spirit, present in us working; that is the pledge.

That is why we try to explain to people that the Christ of whom we are speaking, with whom we are bringing them into contact, is Christ who is living and living in them; and that the Christ who is living in them and working in them and working in them now is the Risen Christ. If we do not

explain Christ that way, I think we will have put a subtle barrier to their understanding of the reality of Christ. If Christ has only that kind of being space-wise and time-wise which He had prior to the death and the resurrection, it is extremely difficult—as a matter of fact, it is impossible—to figure out how he can be working in each one of us no matter where we go and still be in the state of “being in heaven at the right hand of the Father.” But if we begin to explain, according to the intellectual abilities of the group with which we are dealing, the realities of the risen state of Christ then they can see how these things can be reconciled.

To understand Christ in that way opens up an understanding of the Sacraments which is very important. It can remove much of the magical mentality which tends to get into our Catholic faithful with regard to the Sacraments, because of an exaggerated understanding (since the Council of Trent and the Reformation) of the “opus operatum” of the Sacraments. Obviously we believe that the Sacraments work “ex opere operato” but the question arises: What does that mean? It means that there is involved in the Sacramental action itself the causal principle of grace. The Council of Trent tells us the Sacraments contain grace. Does the water of Baptism contain the grace? Do the words contain it? Does the action contain it? If the sacraments are Christ performing an action through the instrumentality of the members of His Church who are there, where precisely are we to locate the *opus operatum*?

The core of this reality must be Christ; it is the presence in the Sacrament of the Risen Christ, of the *gratia capitinis* of Christ, which is effective and is infallibly effective, provided that the person receiving the grace puts no obstacle there. There is nothing magical about this. The power which is operative is the power of Christ. Such an understanding takes Sacraments out of the category of the spectacular and the vaguely miraculous. It takes them from that atmosphere into the clear atmosphere of God intimately dealing with man.

A third point with regard to this idea is that Christ in His risen state working in the Mystical Body, the Church, is the *living and continuing proof of the love of God*. The Father. I think that this is the

third element which is extremely important in the message. The Christian message, just as Christ's own message when He preached in Palestine, is most fundamentally that of the *Fatherhood of God*. This afternoon we will discuss basic themes. One of the themes we will stress then will be that of the Fatherhood of God. Now let us consider it from the point of view of its centrality.

## Christ and The Father

If one examines what Christ said as recorded in the Gospels or the reflection of his words in the Epistles, one sees how Christ was constantly speaking of his Father. Christ could not do anything else; one might almost say there was an ontological compulsion in Christ to do just that, because it flowed from the divine sphere of His personality. He is the Word. His whole person is to speak the Father and, therefore, the overflow of the mystery of His personality into His human nature and the domination of His human consciousness by the mystery of His own divine personality would certainly have reflected that; the Gospels tell us that it did. There was this constant domination of Christ's human thinking by the mystery of His Father, by His mission to reveal the Father to men and to bring men back to the Father.

In this context then, we must present Christ to the people; we have to show Christ in the mystery of His Resurrection living in the Church as being a constant manifestation of His Father. By this we are giving to the people a truly valid idea of God.

The most difficult idea to communicate to people is the correct idea of God. We must constantly struggle in our own thinking not to pervert our understanding of God. We know this well, you and I, who have had all the advantages of professional theological training and the advantages of years of being able to pray and contemplate on these things. We know that even in our own personal prayer we must constantly catch ourselves so that we are not praying short of God. We must constantly break out of our shortsightedness, stop ourselves, and ask, “Who is this God to whom I am praying? He is an infinite being.” Perhaps that idea begins to have its impact. But then one must go on to try to grasp the

reality of the mystery of the Incarnation.

It is so easy to talk of these things. It is so perfectly simple: the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man; what else could one want to know?

But that the God who created the world, an eternal being who is absolutely immeasurable by time or space, that that Being became enmeshed in this whole business of human life! There is well nigh an insoluble contradiction here. Not quite; but close to it: eternity—time, the infinite, finite. All that shows how we have to constantly refine our idea of what God is. Until the impact of the full dimension of God's being its people, the transcendence of Christianity does not start to some through at all.

Most of our Catholic people think of Christianity as being the *best* form of religion. Other people practice religion in different ways. There are other forms of Christianity; Lutherans and Episcopalians, and so on; outside Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Buddhism. Those are all religions and, of course, the best of them, Catholicism, is at the top of the scale. What our Catholics do not grasp is the essential uniqueness of their faith.

In our priestly ministry (those of us who are priests are familiar with it already, those of you who are seminarians will discover it later) we will deal with married couples and find in a genuine Christian love between husband and wife a depth of giving of one person to another which is one of the most precious things that God has given man in the natural order and beyond that the supernatural mystery of Christian matrimony. That whole notion of a personal giving which we learn from this should apply to God and ourselves.

It would be wonderful and remarkable enough if God the Father would simply have given us a channel, an opportunity to go toward Him in love, that He would have given us the power of charity so that we could approach Him. But the fact that He has done so in order that we may possess Him as a friend, that is the still more remarkable reality. We must bring our theological theses to life. When we say that created grace is given for the sake of uncreated grace, what does that mean? What it means is this: God is interested in making friends with us, which is absolutely incredible. In order that

He might enter into that relationship of friendship with us, He gives us the ability to respond to Him. That is why we have sanctifying grace and Faith, Hope and Charity.

And as if that were not enough, that whole thing is in terms of the mystery of God becoming man. But how can we present that to people? By presenting Christ. One can not get away from the historical reality of Christ; He is there. What does He mean? He means that "God so loved the world . . . that He gave His Son." If we are to tell people about God's love for them, we do not have to narrate stories about a mother who loves a child, or about a husband loving a wife—though these may be helps to understanding. What we tell above all else is the fact of Christ. We draw upon all those other instances of love to help understand divine love, but the ultimate thing we have to present is: *here is Christ*. Christ is the measure of God the Father's love for us.

So, we must bring people in this third step to understand that the risen Christ who is presently working in the Church is there as a Sacrament, as a sign, of the Father's love for men.

## Source of Life

As the last step, I think that we must bring them understanding that this love which is manifested in Christ, in the continuing mystery of the Church, is the *source of all life*. People are interested in life. They want to know, no matter what one is telling them, "What is in it for me?" They want to be happy. Though they might not put it in these terms, they want personal development. They want to be someone. They want to go someplace. They want to achieve something. Maybe just a little bit, but they do want to achieve something. And they want to feel that their life has a certain richness to it. Above all they want to be "located," they want to be important, they want to have someone care about them.

Now to give religion vitally to men means to give them life. Christ said, "I have come so that men might have life and might have it more abundantly." Unfortunately when one uses the word "life" in that context, people so often think in terms of vegetative life. When one explains supernatural life,

how often do people think of the life of consciousness? How often do they think of love? Yet that is the level of the life which is involved. God is interested in our living not just simply as humans. He is interested in our living divinely; that we live with a consciousness which is like His own, that we live with an affective life, the life of love, which is like His own, and that step by step we move from our finite enslavement to a share in divine freedom.

That is what the mystery of grace means, this is what we must explain to people. We must explain to them that in the Church, in the risen Christ, I encounter the continuing stream of divine love, which is creative love, giving life to me. As one is confronted with the mysteries of revelation, he is given the very object upon which his life of supernatural consciousness can work, and at that very moment Christ and the Holy Spirit are working with him, giving him the power to respond to revelation. This we must explain so that people may discover what it means to live and so that they find their own personal "location" in the mystery of creation, natural and supernatural. Each of them must discover that he can truly say: "I am this person, beloved by the heavenly Father, who has sent His Son whom I can contact in the mysteries of the Church, in which I am myself a part and in which my living takes on significance." This meaningful self-identification can take root, and it has hope of unending continuation and growth because it is rooted in the love of a Father, a Father who, even though a mother could forget the child whom she has borne, will never forget His people Israel—and much more so, never forget the people who are the new People of God in the Church.

When we give such ideas to people, they do not just contact the "Father" in some vague way, through monotonously reciting the "Our Father." No. They come in to real contact with the love which comes from the Father. This love they contact—and this is our last point—in actions which we call the Sacraments.

Thus our instruction is not vague; it is not a verbalization which leads to a formalistic understanding of God the Father. They understand God the Father, because we lead them to the Mass, wherein His Son and His Spirit are present, working, and wherein God the Father sends His Son in the mystery of the Incarnation to give us, under the external symbols of food, His life, human and divine; so that we may share His Sonship in becoming truly sons of His Father. Once we have led people to that, the the experience of the Mass takes over. We then get out of the picture as fast as possible. And we let the word of God speak and work for itself.

There are many ramifications to these points which we have proposed as four possible points of discussion. I think that all four of them are extremely important; whether or not they are the four most important, I do not know. I think if we approach the presentation of the Christian message in this way, then we have at one and the same time the opening for inexhaustible theological development plus a concreteness and a simplicity of presentation which can make Christianity available and meaningful to little children or to university professors. I believe that the key is to go back to the Scriptures, that is the way God has spoken; back to the Sacraments, that is the way God speaks.

*The death-resurrection is decisive for us. What God has done first in Christ He does also in us. God saves us not by another similar action, but by inserting us in that same mystery of Christ. In Baptism we were made to die and rise with Christ to a new life, the Christ-life. Jesus, now a life-giving Spirit in His humanity, gives us a share in His risen life; we live with His life.*

*The Sower, January, 1964*

# Parish Employs Lay Theologians

Charles Baireuther

A priest with an idea before him and a university behind him has started a movement which is fast spreading throughout western United States, is very likely headed east, and may have repercussions as far away as Rome.

The priest, a Jesuit, is Father Eugene Robert Zimmers. In 1945 Father Zimmers had an idea: why not tap the resources of an educated American laity to water the wasteland of 80 million religiously uncommitted Americans?

After 15 years of preparation, Father Zimmers saw his idea come to life on the Jesuit campus of the University of San Francisco. There, in June of 1960, he founded the Institute of Lay Theology (ILT).

ILT is something that, according to Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken of San Francisco, could grow "very large and powerful in this country and perhaps in the whole universal Church . . . I think that to allow the Council to discuss the Lay Apostolate and not report on this particular school of Lay Theology, this lay apostolate, would be a great disservice to the Church. And I am sure that it will evoke a great deal of interest because the vast majority of the bishops are open to new ideas."

ILT! What is this new service that the Archbishop feels will grow very large and powerful?

It is a pioneer program, a "New Frontier" in American Catholicism, a new horizon for Catholic laymen, another manifestation of the "priesthood of the faithful." It is a program which trains Catholic laymen, on a professional level, to become parish Inquiry Forum Directors (IFD). As forum directors, they will explain the Faith to the uncommitted who desire a way of life, com-

mitted non-Catholics who want to understand the religious beliefs that influence their Catholic friends, and Catholics who seek a deeper understanding of the grace of God.

IFDs are paid well for their services. The Institute does not believe in taking high-salaried professional men and asking them to train for work on which their families will starve. Forum directors start as professional lay theologians with an annual salary of \$7,200 provided by the one or two parishes which employ them. This amount increases to \$1,000 a month in three years.

The 41-year-old Jesuit responsible for ILT learned a lot about making converts when he was stationed at St. Matthew's Church in Phoenix, Arizona. Testing his embryo program there, Father Zimmers discovered that the cost of converting a man was more than covered by the increased income the new convert brought to the Church.

This being so, he reasoned, no pastor should object to paying to a well-trained layman, a specialist in teaching the Faith, the kind of salary that would attract top people.

He sold his idea to enough bishops and pastors in California, Arizona and Nevada to finance ILT. Then he organized a faculty of 27 (now 40) professors to give the future forum directors a thorough instruction in Catholicism and the techniques of expounding it.

Some instructors are faculty members of the University of San Francisco. Others are brought in — from Chicago, New York, Washington, Rome — to fill specific needs. For the course in contemporary religious

beliefs, for example, ministers from a dozen prominent denominations each spend from two to four hours discussing their beliefs with students of the Institute.

ILT first attracted national attention in June of 1961 through an article in *Time* magazine:

"Six young Roman Catholic men in San Francisco last week put behind them for good six ordinary jobs and took up a new profession that they expect to find richly idealistic and well paid too: lay theology.

"Once trained," the article in *Time* continued, "they will be ready to teach the theology of the Roman Catholic Church to ordinary men and women — Catholic and non-Catholic — in any parish that hires them . . . Each of them (IFDs) plans to work in two neighboring parishes, giving in each a series of 24 lectures four times a year, as well as following up on converts and getting to know the parishes and their people 'on a country-doctor basis.'"

The *Time* article occasioned a flood of applications to ILT. Of some 700 inquiries, 612 were rejected without a second look. Of the remaining 88, only 12 were accepted for the 1961 class.

Candidate requirements are exacting: four years of Catholic university education or equivalent; military service completed or waived; at least 28 years of age. Each candidate must pass a comprehensive psychological test, and those unable to take direction or work with others are eliminated from consideration.

There must be a signed medical report, and four confidential evaluations: from a friend, a professor, an employer and his pastor. The applicant must provide the Institute with a tape recording to demonstrate the quality of his voice and his speaking ability.

Finally, he is examined by an admissions board consisting of a psychologist, a business executive, a chaplain and the director of the Institute. The candidate's final acceptance depends on the decision of the Board of Admissions.

Once accepted, an ILT man begins his ten months of intensive training as an Inquiry Forum Director. There are two points of emphasis: the lecture series for the Inquiry Forum and methods of organization. The men are trained to present the Faith accurately, attractively and forcefully, and to

motivate a parish to substantial attendance at the Inquiry Forum.

After completing this training, the ILT man goes into the field to organize and direct inquiry forums. It is required that graduate IFDs return to the Institute once a year to trade ideas and take exams in their continuing studies, "to prevent them from becoming theologically incompetent," says Father Zimmers.

## Varied Backgrounds

Each class graduated by ILT has had its own particular characteristics.

In the first class of 1960, the average age was 29. Only one of the seven was married: Martin O'Brien, Jr., father of six. Prior to entering ILT, O'Brien had been a partner in an insurance brokerage. At present he is assigned to two parishes in Sacramento, California, where he gives (in the words of one priest) "the best talks on marriage in the Sacramento diocese."

Before entering ILT other graduates of the first class had been: a Los Angeles high school teacher of history and mathematics; a copy editor on the *San Francisco Chronicle*; a university professor, accountant, and restaurant owner; a counselor to teen-age delinquents; graduate students of sociology, philosophy and theology, one of whom also is an ex-paratrooper.

The average age of the class of 1961 was 31. Three of the 15 men were still single at the beginning of the year. The remaining 12 had a total of 46 children. Among the trainees were a school teacher, stock broker, engineer, college admissions counselor, philosophy professor, salesman and lawyer.

The class of 1963 has an average age of 38 — the oldest 49 years of age, the youngest 28. Twelve of the 13 are married; their children total 55. Prior to entering ILT, three were attorneys, three were in insurance, three in sales work, two in teaching and two in public relations and radio-TV.

Parish demand for IFDs has outstripped the supply. The Institute has placed 35 IFDs in 47 parishes throughout California, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon and Washington.

Using his thorough training in parochial organizational dynamics, each forum director works through a systematic application of the techniques of human relations, advertising salesmanship and management.

What is involved in the promotional effort? Mailers, brochures, parish bulletins, motion pictures, slides, billboards, placards, spot announcements on radio and TV, house-to-house canvassing by special teams, "angel" or "buddy" systems, make-up classes on tape, large quantities of pamphlets to be given away, coffee-breaks and teas given by parishioners to establish social relationships with potential converts.

Following this intensive public relations effort is the Inquiry Forum itself lasting two-and-a-half months. Individuals completing the Forum lectures see the parish priests for three personal interviews and are given six tests to determine readiness for Baptism.

The Baptism of converts is marked by an impressive celebration in which all parishioners are invited to participate.

After their Baptism, converts are not left to shift for themselves in their newly found, still overwhelming Catholic Faith. Contacts are maintained, a Converts' Guild is established, and new Catholics are encouraged in every way to strive for a life of solid virtue and piety, to bring Christ into their daily lives so all men may come to know that God loves them.

Only two weeks elapse between the end of one Inquiry Forum and the beginning of the next. The idea is that the whole undertaking will be repeated over and over until everyone living within the parish has had an opportunity to become a Catholic.

What are the results? Does all this work and planning pay off?

Indeed it does! In a recent interview with IFD Don Nicodemus (stationed in Santa Cruz, California) we learned that most IFDs are having outstanding success. Based on Forum results, each experienced Director averages 50 conversions a year — indicating a potential of 50,000 conversions for 1,000 trained Directors. This total does not include the returns-to-the-Faith which average about 73 per experienced IFD each year.

"That is *really* something," Don said, "if you recall that prior to World War II, mostly through individual instruction, annual converts per U.S. priest averaged 2.5. But each IFD has been averaging one convert or returned-to-the-Faith out of every four persons attending his lectures."

ILT estimates that a conscientious "re-

motivated parishioner" will succeed in nurturing 4.1 conversions a year. Every active Catholic who attends a Forum series is regarded by ILT as gaining a 25 per cent increase in his educational facility to project the meaning of the Church among the uncommitted.

## Testimonials

IFD George Randol (stationed in Fresno, California) numbered 75 converts for his first nine months as Forum Director. His pastors have agreed that "the program already has paid for itself." Monsignor James G. Dowling, with whom Randol works, wrote to ILT:

"Two hundred persons attended the Inquiry series conducted by lay theologian George Randol during his first six months in the parish . . . It was not merely accidental that record numbers of people attended Mass at Christmas and that we distributed almost 10,000 Communions during the last week of 1961."

IFD David Duran (assigned to Salinas, California) has been teaching classes that have never numbered less than 80. In fact, he exceeded what was required in the line of duty. At present he is in Los Angeles at Loyola University preparing to go to Rome to study for the priesthood.

Bishop Charles Francis Buddy of San Diego gave ILT the following testimonial:

"This program, in reality, complements our Crusade for Souls . . . Please God, it will thrive in the Diocese of San Diego. The plan not only attracts non-Catholics to the Faith but it takes a great burden from the pastors and priests of the parish in recruiting converts for the Church. My conviction is that inasmuch as countless souls are involved in this apostolate, we have no choice but to cooperate."

Applications continue to pour into the ILT office at the University of San Francisco. Plans are in the offing for expansion of ILT, for it cannot keep up with the demand for trained Inquiry Forum Directors. But significant and rapid expansion will depend on other factors than demand alone, as a recent ILT newsletter item underlined:

"We are sorry a request from Most Reverend Charles H. Helmsing, Bishop of the Kansas City diocese, for an IFD for two parishes had to be put on the waiting list

because of a shortage of talent and the policy of ILT to restrict itself to the Pacific Coast-Nevada-Arizona until all 'bugs' are eliminated from the fledgling program."

With a frank appraisal of the program, the item continued: "We must be brutally honest: certain areas are showing phenomenal results, others are average (which is nothing but the worst of the best and the best of the worst), and a few areas are below average in convert-performance."

A man less concerned with top-flight performance than Father Zimmers in the perfection of his basic plan and in the flawless

working out of its details would have moved less cautiously. But Father Zimmers as well as those who are in the ILT program or who have been served by it are convinced that it is too significant a development to be allowed to falter through methods that are less than the best that can be worked out.

Certainly the experiment so far has proved two things: the need for a well-organized, well-developed inquiry program in U.S. parishes and the feasibility of training well-qualified laymen to share in this apostolic work of the Church as full-time, professional theologians.

*Visiting the sheep and goats in their homes, especially the goats, is perhaps the central point of the English pastoral tradition. For some priests it goes much against the grain, and they are the ones who gain most by it themselves, quite apart from the good they may do, which may often seem problematical. Without visiting people in their homes, you don't even know what is happening, who has newly arrived or gone away, who is having a baby or a breakdown, which Protestant partners are convertible, or who is at what school or has left school for good and all. Without visiting the rest of a priest's work is rather like shooting arrows at a target hidden by mist; as the work of school teachers often tends to be nowadays, when they can't visualize the home conditions. Priestly visiting (for visiting by legionaries or such-like can never be the same thing) can be looked on as part of the Church's teaching-effort or catechesis; it is a form of community-witness, reminding people that their soul matters to somebody. And any bits of "occasional" teaching that falls from the priest's lips will have more effect than ten of his sermons, even if the hearer happens to be a church-goer.*

*The Sower, January, 1964*

# BOOKS RECEIVED

The Diocesan Clergy

Bishop A. M. Charue

Translated by Rev. Michael J. Wren

Desclee Co. \$4.75

The author of this work, His Excellency Antoine-Marie Charue, Bishop of Namur in Belgium, is a member of the Commission on the Clergy for the Vatican Council. It is the fruit of years of pondering over the nature of the spirituality of the diocesan clergy. He writes in his foreword that "An awareness of the distinct originality and purpose of this clergy and the providential role that they play in the Church is necessary if secular priests are to be successfully guided and encouraged in the fulfilment of their mission." He has accordingly produced this synthesis which encompasses areas of theology, history, canon law, and ascetics.

His book is divided into five parts. In the first he treats of the history of clerical formation from the Council of Trent to the present. It is not exhaustive, but it is intended to give a historical perspective to a work which is primarily pastoral. The second part is concerned with various aspects of the episcopacy and many things he wrote here were later echoed in council debates. One fine chapter speaks of the universal mission of bishops.

He goes on in the third part to treat states of perfection in reference to the clergy. In the fourth part he follows this up with a consideration of the spirituality of the diocesan clergy and with a chapter which might be considered a long footnote on religious. The final section deals with models and patrons of the secular clergy. An appendix lists the names of these models and patrons in alphabetical order.

The writer's style, at least in translation, is somewhat heavy, but the work is eminently worthwhile. It is scholarly but practical. All of the bishop's insights and recommendations are reinforced with impressive quotations. We might echo what Cardinal Van Roey states in his preface: "Clerical literature certainly abounds in excellent books on

the priesthood and particularly on the diocesan clergy. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to say that the present work of Bishop Charue will certainly constitute a spiritual enrichment of this field since it sheds a new and perhaps decisive light upon several important questions."

Religions of the World

John A. Hardon, S.J.

The Newman Press \$7.50

Father Hardon is associate professor of Comparative Religion at Western Michigan University. He has previously had published *The Protestant Churches of America* and *Christianity in Conflict*. In this book he has widened his sights and has undertaken to review the beliefs and practices of the leading religions of mankind current in the world today. Most of his sources are works published by representative writers within their own tradition and the sacred books venerated by the different religions. His bibliography covers some eighteen pages and never gives in to the temptation to include works in foreign languages.

He treats of eight oriental religions, then of Judaism and of five religions with Judaic origins, four of these being forms of Christianity. The oriental religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Shinto, and Sikhism. Fifty years ago these were of little importance in the western world and some of them were unknown by name except to a few travelers and scholars. Today, however, the world is shrinking rapidly and forms of oriental religion are being found around the corner in our larger cities of the west. Some acquaintance with their tenets and some knowledge of their history is no longer unimportant. Father Hardon provides this with clarity and conciseness.

More imperative is an understanding of those who are closer to us in terms of culture and belief. We cannot afford to be

ignorant of Judaism, which is the parent of Islam and Christianity. And we cannot dismiss either Islam or the Christianity of our separated brethren. Father Hardon has almost miraculously managed to condense history, belief and practice into a few hundred readable pages. His book is a mine of information. It belongs on the reference shelf of every priest.

You Shall Be Witnesses  
Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.  
Fides \$3.50

This is not a new book, but the fact that it has recently gone into its third printing prompts a review at this date. Its central concern is lay spirituality. Father Geaney recognizes that traditional notions of the spiritual life, largely borrowed from monastic practices, are not germane to the lives of the modern laity. The layman finds himself in a complex and sometimes confusing world. He is no mere observer of it. He is part of its complexity and confusion.

One might say that he is trapped in it. And many undoubtedly have felt this way. Its tensions, crises, and problems are capable of crushing the humanity out of man and reducing him to a kind of automation, free only to conform. How is it possible for one to grow spiritually in this situation? How can one be in the world but not of the world, and so fulfill the Christian vocation of giving witness to the world?

Father Geaney does not offer an ordered treatise in answer, but he does give insights and practical suggestions for an ideal Christian life molded from the very elements that seem to make it impossible. He says: "A spirituality for lay people cannot be rooted in alienation, rejection, or repression of what offends our sensitivities. It is based on facing up to both the hardness and shallowness in ourselves that recoils and escapes from the sight of sufferings. Growth in the love of God must be pivoted on the Incarnation. This means a loving acceptance of our human qualities, both good and bad, and our relationships with our fellowmen with whom we are joined by the common humanity which we share with them and Christ."

National Catholic Almanac 1964  
St. Anthony's Guild

Described as a "one volume encyclopedia of facts and information on every phase of Catholic life," this valuable reference work appears in its 58th edition. Its material is compiled by the Franciscan clerics of Holy Name College, Washington, D.C. The editor is Father Felician Foy, O.F.M.

All of the old features of the almanac have been brought up to date. These include a 48 page summary of 1963 Catholic news events; the ecumenical movement; morality of nuclear testing and war; papal peace plans; the Church in Latin America and other foreign lands; listings of Catholic periodicals and organizations; comparison of marriage laws and many other features. It is also replete with new additions such as the complete text of *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John's last major encyclical, along with some expert opinions on this highly acclaimed document.

## GUIDE

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GUIDE  
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# Guide Lights

## END OF AN ERA . . .

Recently Lutheran Pastor Wolfgang Lehmann of Offenbach announced that Die Sammlung (The Gathering), a Protestant association established nine years ago to promote the understanding of Catholic teaching among Protestants, has discontinued its activities. In the last issue of the Sammlung Bulletin, the Rev. Hans Asmussen, a founder of the movement, explained that the time has come when the work done by this group should be taken over officially by the bishops of his church. "The Reformation," he says, "does not have a meaning in itself. Rather it is a call to the Catholic Church. Its mission was to bring about a reform of the Church and not the establishment of separate churches." He also stated, "It is certain that eventually Rome will not be anymore what it is today, for great things are happening. God is doing great things in Rome."

## ROMAN RENEWAL . . .

Another Lutheran scholar not connected with Die Sammlung, Prof. Kristen E. Skydsgaard, is agreed that "great things are happening." The Vatican Council has changed everything. "The council," he said in a talk at Rome, "is a sign of mobility, even of fundamental change in the Roman Catholic Church, a sign of its willingness to think things over, to bring about reform and renewal. Roman Catholicism has entered a new epoch of its life with determination and concrete energy. A change is going on from a Roman Catholicism secure in itself, authoritarian and juridical, toward a Catholicism that is open-minded, willing to serve and of much freer perspectives."

## COUNCIL REPORTING . . .

In this country a Methodist theologian who has also noticed the element of change has criticized the reporting of the council which has left the impression that it has "finally bogged down, sabotaged by those villains in the Roman Curia." The theologian was Dr. Albert C. Outler, professor of theology at Southern Methodist University. He said that the dilemma of the council is this: "If it hurries, its results are al-

most certain to be inferior; if it takes the necessary time to ventilate an issue and to revise the schemata often enough, it is scolded for bogging down."

Dr. Outler, who is a permanent observer at the council, went on to say that it is for this reason that it seems important to insist that the council is a massive experiment in self-examination and aggiornamento. What the outcome will be is still a matter of speculation. "Nobody knows really," the professor said, "but it does seem at least vainly self-righteous for the Orthodox, who oppose reform in principle, or for the Protestants, who have supported the principle of reform, at the cost of endless schism, to denigrate the tremendous and deliberate effort at renovation which Vatican II represents."

## FOR MORE COUNCILS . . .

To insure that renovation once begun will continue, Cardinal Ritter has suggested that there ought to be a council every ten years. "I don't see why we should not have frequent councils," he said. He pointed out that the present council has not taken too much time away from the bishops for the proper exercise of their office. Nor has it been difficult for those even from faraway lands to reach Rome in a comparatively short time. So, he concluded, "I don't think it would be too much of a hardship for the bishops to meet every ten years."

The prelate also expressed hope that the coming session would be able to pass most of the schemata now before it "so that the Church can present another face to the world. This is necessary so that the Catholic Faith can be more understood, and be made more meaningful to mankind." One of the matters for which he hopes quick passage is the declaration on religious liberty. He said it would reassure Protestant groups in this country. He noted that having a Catholic president did much to reassure them, "but they would like to have some statement from a high level giving them further assurances."

"Some have come to expect that someday the Catholic Church would become predominant," he said, "And then where would their religious freedom be? This statement on religious liberty is to reassure them."

## AN INTRANSIGEANT PLEA . . .

We may suppose that Cardinal Ritter's remarks were well received by Protestants. Remarks of an Irish archbishop in an appeal for unity were not so well received in his native country. The press and the Anglican Church of Ireland criticized Archbishop John C. McQuaid of Dublin for the "intransigeant" manner in which he asked for prayers for Christian unity during the Chair of Unity Octave. The archbishop said: "Catholics throughout the Church unite . . . at this season for the intention of the Holy Father that Christians separated in doctrine and discipline from the Holy See may at length, by the grace of God, rejoin the true Church of Christ."

## LITURGICAL WORK AHEAD . . .

Father Frank Norris, S.S. says that an enormous task faces the liturgists in the revisions that are to follow upon the new constitution approved by the Holy Father. "It would be naive," he says, "to think that the reform will consist simply in providing vernacular translations of the existing liturgical texts. Were that the case, one of the many translations in use could easily be adopted and given official status." He insists that much more is involved. There must be a thorough-going revision of the present rite. This includes the text of the prayers, the choice of scripture, and the ceremonial actions. He maintains that the fore-Mass especially needs a complete reform. "It appears now," he states, "as an indifferent series of prayers and readings spoken by the priest at the altar, his back to the congregation." He believes that none of the fore-Mass properly belongs at the altar. In its earlier form it consisted of an entrance rite and a Scripture service. It should be restored so that there is an entrance hymn followed by the Kyrie and Gloria when the procession has entered the sanctuary. Afterwards the collect, scripture readings and homily should be conducted from a lectern. "Were the fore-Mass conducted in some such fashion," says Father Norris, then the Eucharist proper would stand out as clearly distinct from all that preceded it."

## CATECHISM REVISION . . .

Bishop Charles P. Greco of Alexandria, Louisiana, chairman of the Bishop's Committee for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine said that theologians, scripture scholars and experts in liturgy and cateche-

tics will be invited to begin preliminary work on a general revision of the Baltimore Catechism. This revision is expected to reflect the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. The work will be under the direction of Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken of San Francisco.

## A LAYMAN SPEAKS . . .

In a letter to the editor of the New York Catholic News, Theodore T. McDonald has some interesting comments. He says: "What is often neglected in gaining a true picture of the relation of the layman to his Church is the fact that in the modern world we are in transition; that is that the Church through its Hierarchy and priesthood has discovered that the layman of today is not the same layman as forty years ago when education was at a premium and when men of limited background relied entirely upon the clergy. . . .

"In the modern picture the layman is no longer entirely dependent upon the clergy and apparently from my personal discussions he wants more than the usual parochial societies. The intellectual is not going to be satisfied with a group where an hour or two can be consumed in a futile discussion about what color badges or banner they should have. I do not feel that the intellectual, however, with all his talk and writing, is often as productive in a Catholic Action sense as the man of less gifts.

"The most important thing in the relation of Hierarchy, priest and layman is not, as I see it, to build up the prestige of the layman by putting him on consulting boards. The crux of this whole matter of the Ecumenical Council, as regards the layman, is how to make the layman feel that it is his duty (not choice), to make the Church felt in the modern world and in the market place."

## A MUSICAL FIRST . . .

Darius Milhaud, a Jewish composer, had a novel idea while he was vacationing in California. He set the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, to music. Permission to perform it was granted to the French network by the Vatican, and it was the highlight of a program to inaugurate the concert hall of the new studios of the broadcasting company. Mr. Milhaud said that his composition had an ecumenical purpose. The concert was conducted by Charles Muench, former director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

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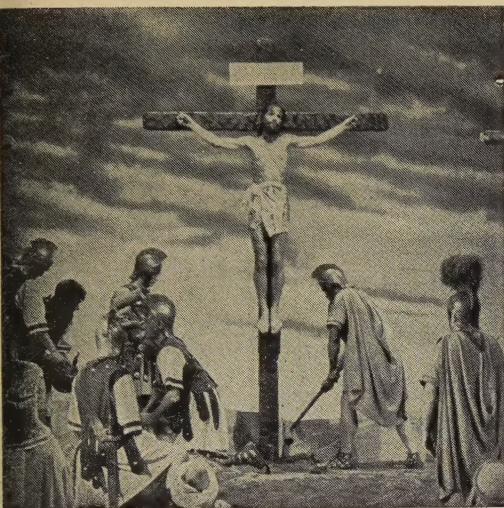
KITS FOR APOSTLES OF GOOD WILL. This kit has been introduced to assist in the training and the activities of members of the Confraternity. It is suitable, however, for any lay group under the direction of a priest. It contains some of the material in the kit for priests, but a great deal more. The cost is \$5.00 postpaid.



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